## Basic information

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|---|---|
| **2006/2240(INI)**<br>INI - Own-initiative procedure | Procedure completed |
| Promoting decent work for all<br>**Subject**<br>4.15 Employment policy, action to combat unemployment | |

## Key players

### European Parliament

| Committee responsible | Rapporteur | Appointed |
|---|---|---|
| EMPL Employment and Social Affairs | PANAYOTOPOULOS-CASSIOTOU Marie (PPE-DE) | 21/06/2006 |

| Committee for opinion | Rapporteur for opinion | Appointed |
|---|---|---|
| AFET Foreign Affairs | The committee decided not to give an opinion. | |
| DEVE Development | UCA Feleknas (GUE/NGL) | 06/11/2006 |
| INTA International Trade | DÉSIR Harlem (PSE) | 11/09/2006 |
| FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality | SARTORI Amalia (PPE-DE) | 11/10/2006 |

### Council of the European Union

| Council configuration | Meetings | Date |
|---|---|---|
| Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs | 2767 | 2006-11-30 |

### European Commission

| Commission DG | Commissioner |
|---|---|
| Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion | ŠPIDLA Vladimír |

## Key events

| Date | Event | Reference | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|
| 24/05/2006 | Non-legislative basic document published | COM(2006)0249 | Summary |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 28/09/2006 | Committee referral announced in Parliament | | |
| 30/11/2006 | Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council | | Summary |
| 01/03/2007 | Vote in committee | | Summary |
| 15/03/2007 | Committee report tabled for plenary | A6-0068/2007 | |
| 23/05/2007 | Decision by Parliament | T6-0206/2007 | Summary |
| 23/05/2007 | Results of vote in Parliament | | |
| 23/05/2007 | Debate in Parliament | | |
| 23/05/2007 | End of procedure in Parliament | | |

## Technical information

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| **Procedure reference** | 2006/2240(INI) |
| **Procedure type** | INI - Own-initiative procedure |
| **Procedure subtype** | Initiative |
| **Legal basis** | Rules of Procedure EP 55 |
| **Stage reached in procedure** | Procedure completed |
| **Committee dossier** | EMPL/6/40619 |

## Documentation gateway

**European Parliament**

| Document type | Committee | Reference | Date | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Committee draft report | | PE378.731 | 13/11/2006 | |
| Amendments tabled in committee | | PE378.732 | 14/12/2006 | |
| Committee opinion | INTA | PE378.752 | 08/01/2007 | |
| Committee opinion | FEMM | PE382.365 | 24/01/2007 | |
| Committee opinion | DEVE | PE382.574 | 28/02/2007 | |
| Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading | | A6-0068/2007 | 15/03/2007 | |
| Text adopted by Parliament, single reading | | T6-0206/2007 | 23/05/2007 | Summary |

**European Commission**

| Document type | Reference | Date | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|
| Non-legislative basic document | COM(2006)0249 | 24/05/2006 | Summary |
| Follow-up document | SEC(2008)2184 | 02/07/2008 | Summary |

# Promoting decent work for all

2006/2240(INI) - 24/05/2006 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: Communication on the EU’s contribution to promoting the decent work agenda.

CONTENT: This paper follows the ILO’s strategy on the decent work agenda. The agenda is based on an integrated approach covering productive and freely chosen work, rights at work, social protection, the social dialogue and the inclusion of the gender dimension. It therefore encompasses the “core labour standards” which form the minimum basis of social rights established by the international community and whose implementation the Union already supports. But the decent work agenda implies more: it seeks not only to guarantee a minimum basis of rights but also to tailor development to values and principles of action and governance which combine economic competitiveness with social justice.

Combining economic competitiveness and social justice in this way is at the heart of the European model of development. Playing an active part in promoting decent work forms an integral part of the European Social Agenda and of the EU's efforts to promote its values and share its experience and its model of integrated economic and social development. In supporting the promotion of the decent work agenda the Commission takes the characteristics and diverse nature of the economic and social situations across the world fully into account. It recognises the importance of a step-by-step strategy which will help partner countries to take ownership and is geared to the circumstances and priorities at national and regional level.

In this Communication, the Commission proposes strategies for ensuring that EU policy and action play a greater part in promoting the decent work agenda. These strategies involve strengthening cooperation between the European institutions, the Member States and all the relevant stakeholders. The EU could promote the agenda by sharing its experience with international organisations and developing a political dialogue with regions and countries outside the EU. The Commission has already introduced specific measures in this area, such as stepping up its cooperation with the ILO, implementing the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), developing the European consensus on development and initiating

dialogues on employment with the countries in Asia and Latin America. The Commission proposes the following:

**- raising awareness in order to convince and mobilise more effectively:** the Commission will work with the ILO, the UN and other organisations to explore in greater depth the problem of decent work, improve the capacity of the partner countries and develop appropriate indicators, i.e.:

- identify good practice and successes in the field;

- examine decent work in greater depth and the way in which it interacts with other policies;

- develop methodologies for measuring how decent work is affected by trade liberalisation and global production and distribution systems at global level, including in export processing zones; expand the pilot study under way with the ILO in order to measure the impact of trade on decent work;

- examine in greater depth the impact of trade on sustainable development (SIA);

- improve the link between analyses, operational activities and the planning of external assistance;

- promote a concerted approach between partner countries and regions in order to select priorities more effectively and harness external assistance.

**- harnessing the EU's external policies more effectively:** with regard to candidate countries, the Commission will support initiatives on:

- promoting trade union freedom and collective bargaining in order to enhance the capacity of the parties concerned to engage in autonomous social dialogue;

- improving labour administration, labour inspectorates and bodies for managing social protection;

- developing prevention strategies in the field of health and safety at work.

With regard to those countries covered by the European neighbourhood policy, the policy will help to promote decent work through:

- implementation of clear reforms concerning core labour standards, employment, social affairs and equal opportunities set out in the action plans agreed between the EU and the countries concerned;

- regular political dialogue concerning issues relating to the institutional structures established as a result of the partnership and cooperation agreements and the association agreements;

- implementation of the five-year work plan agreed as part of the Barcelona process which seeks to strengthen systems of social protection in the southern Mediterranean countries;

– inclusion of thematic planning and other aspects of cooperation in the strategy documents for each country and region; possible involvement of the countries concerned in certain Community programmes and cooperation with EU agencies, in accordance with arrangements which are still to be determined.

With regard to development cooperation, the Commission will support the following measures as part of thematic programming and the country and regional programming:

- integrate decent work into national and regional strategies to promote development and reduce poverty;

- gradual inclusion of the decent work objective in budget support measures;

- improve the capacity of the competent authorities and civil society organisations;

-development of small and medium-sized enterprises;

- involvement of the social partners and civil society in development strategies and in poverty reduction strategies;

- strengthening of external assistance for social adjustments in countries and regions outside the EU which are involved in trade liberalisation;

- promotion of policy coherence and cooperation with relevant international and regional organisations.

In addition, Regulation 2110/2005/EC imposes an obligation on those submitting tenders for contracts financed by Community assistance to respect core labour standards. The Commission plans to extend this provision to contracts financed through the European Development Fund. The Commission calls on the Member States and other donors to adopt the same approach.

**Trade:** the Commission will put more of its commercial weight behind efforts to promote social standards and decent work in bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations. In particular, it plans to:

- improve the link between the GSP, the GSP + and Community external assistance;

- take account of the social dimension, decent work and the recommendations of SIA studies in bilateral and regional trade negotiations (including the APE/EPA, the ACP countries, Mercosur, the Gulf Cooperation Council, MED and Central America);

- make use of EU policies and instruments, such as external assistance, to promote decent work in the context of an open system of trade;

- adopt the approach concerning the interaction between trade, social rights and employment which was presented in 2004 in the submissions to the trade policy review mechanism, and encourage other members of the WTO to adopt this approach;

- promote cooperation between the WTO, UNCTAD, the ILO and other relevant organisations.

The Commission also discusses in this paper the need to strengthen international and multilateral governance as part of economic and social cooperation, the need for better management of economic migration, and strengthening the capacity of the social partners and of civil society. It states that it will continue to promote corporate social responsibility, andcalled on businesses, the European Alliance for CSR and other stakeholders to take action to promote decent work for all.

The Commission will produce a report on the follow-up to this Communication by the summer of 2008.

# Promoting decent work for all

2006/2240(INI) - 23/05/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report by Marie **PANAYOTOPOULOS-CASSIOTOU** (EPP-ED, EL) on promoting decent work for all. The report urged EU Member States and candidate countries to ratify and fully implement all relevant conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and called for a decent work development programme and minimum wages. (Please refer to the summary dated 01/03/2007).

# Promoting decent work for all

2006/2240(INI) - 02/07/2008 - Follow-up document

This report on the EU contribution to the promotion of decent work in the world backs up the Commission’s commitment to promote the internationally-agreed decent work agenda through cooperation with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and other partners, and the mobilisation of all relevant policies. It highlights ongoing efforts and challenges in mobilising the EU’s internal and external policies and all relevant stakeholders to promote decent work for all – by supporting the setting of policy agendas and standards at multilateral level, developing bilateral relations and exchange on these issues with partner countries and regions, as well as integrating decent work objectives into the EU’s trade and development policies.

The report also underlines that the EU Member States can set an example by ratifying and applying up-to-date conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The EU contribution to decent work throughout the world is part of its efforts to strengthen the social dimension of globalisation, both in the EU and outside, and builds on existing EU initiatives in this regard. It is driven by mutually reinforcing economic, employment, social and environmental policies, in line with the internal and external dimensions of the EU Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs and the 2005 European Consensus on Development.

In particular, the report addresses the following elements:

- decent work as an EU commitment;
- the mobilisation of non-state actors;

- the EU contribution at international, multilateral and regional level;
- the mobilisation of EU internal and external policies;
- the ratification and implementation of ILO conventions by EU Member States.

It contains an assessment of progress made since 2006 as well as proposals where further headway could can be made as part of the strategies outlined in the 2006 Communication on "Decent Work", taking into account new developments. The report proposes reviewing progress made at EU level and by the Member States in a report to be prepared in 2011.

The report concludes that the overview of progress made since 2006 clearly demonstrates that a **number of important achievements have been made in both internal and external EU policies**. The EU actively contributed to international, regional and national initiatives, with a view to move from words to action. The added value of the EU contribution and the leadership of the Commission in this have been widely recognised and appreciated. The mobilisation of EU institutions, EU Member States and stakeholders is on track. There is consensus, both in the EU and internationally, that decent work is a factor in development, governance and performance and that its implementation calls for sustained, coherent and integrated policies and close involvement of social partners and wider civil society.

The international campaign for a worldwide ratification of the eight core labour standards (CLS) Conventions has contributed to a significant increase in the global ratification level. All 27 EU have ratified the CLS Conventions since 2007. The EU's GSP plus scheme has for instance contributed to these efforts in a number of third countries. Ratification of other ILO conventions, classified by ILO as up to date, is also improving. Decent work instruments, tools and programmes are being elaborated and implemented. The objective of decent work for all is now part of mainstream international development goals and frameworks and poverty reduction strategies. Promoting decent work is part of EU development and external assistance cooperation, of a number of EU partnership agreements and cooperation with third countries and regions and of ongoing discussions on EU bilateral trade agreements with third countries. Decent work is an element of the internal and external dimension of the EU Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs.

**However many challenges lie ahead** as:

- recognition of decent work as part of key international development goals and national poverty reduction strategies is a recent evolution; therefore the effective implementation of decent work in development policies and poverty reduction strategies, programmes and frameworks is often still at an embryonic phase in many developing countries and in many donor operations;
- decent work operates in an increasingly complex international context such as the intensification of globalisation and its relationship with issues such as climate change, trade and higher food prices; all this provides both opportunities such as the employment potential of climate change, as illustrated by the ILO green jobs strategy discussion, and challenges such as labour market transitions to a low carbon economy;
- decent work as a factor of governance directly relates to the persisting deficits in effective global governance and in labour market governance at national and regional level. This is illustrated by the lack of effective application of ILO Conventions, including CLS, in too many countries and the existence of a large informal economy in most of the developing and emerging economies.

The proposals on "further progress to make" as included in the different sections of this report are intended to improve further the effective implementation of the orientations and strategies made in the 2006 decent work Communication.

All EU institutions have been called upon to ensure an effective and regular follow-up and coordination of the initiatives and actions to promote decent work both by the EU institutions, the EU Member states and stakeholders. As a response to this call, and in view to strengthening synergies and cooperation, it would be appropriate that the EU reports in 2011 on efforts, both by EU institutions, Member States and stakeholders, on promoting decent work throughout the world.

# Promoting decent work for all

2006/2240(INI) - 30/11/2006

Regarding the Communication of the Commission "Promoting decent work for all - the EU contribution to the implementation of the decent work agenda in the world", the Council published a series of conclusions in which it gave its opinion of the Communication, and, at the same time, its interpretation of “decent work” in the framework of Community policy.

The conclusions may be summarised as follows :

**Decent work in the EU**: the Council felt that decent work must be promoted in order to strengthen the competitiveness of the EU in a socially sustainable way, to improve productivity and the quality of working life, life-long learning, good working relations as well as better reconciliation of work and private life. The policy must be implemented through combating gender discrimination and all other forms of discrimination in the light of Article 13 (TEC), as well as promoting the social integration of vulnerable groups. EU Member States have ratified a large number of ILO Conventions, including the Conventions on core labour standards. The Council emphasised the relevance of the Decent Work Agenda for EU candidate countries and the complementarity of certain ILO Conventions and strategies with the Community acquis. It also welcomed the Commission's commitment in its Communication on decent work to encouraging the ratification and application of the ILO Conventions on core labour standards, and other ILO Conventions that have been classified by the ILO as up to date.

**Decent work and development cooperation**: the Council indicated that the promotion of decent work for all across the world is one of the key means of fostering development, poverty eradication and social cohesion. Recalling the European Consensus on Development, it encouraged governments in partner countries to increase their efforts to create an enabling environment for private sector development and investment, the benefits of which include increased investments and employment for the population. The Council recognised in particular the need to promote country-led Decent Work Country Programmes through development cooperation – including policy dialogue on employment impacts of economic policies and governance, budget support measures and capacity building, in particular institutional capacity building. This must be well-coordinated between the European Commission, the Member States and other international development partners, as well as the international financial institutions. All those submitting

tenders for EC external assistance funded contracts should respect core labour standards. This obligation should be extended to contracts financed in the framework of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

**Decent work and trade related issues**: the Council stressed that trade liberalisation plays an important role in helping to achieve sustainable growth, full employment, poverty reduction and the promotion of decent work. Highlighting the key role of the EU Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) in the promotion of international conventions on core labour standards and human rights, it welcomed the new GSP with its special incentive for sustainable development and good governance, and supported the improvement of the link between GSP and EC external assistance. There needs to be further development of methodologies assessing the effects of trade and trade agreements on decent work, including in global supply chains and export processing zones. The Council recalled that the endorsement of social objectives should not be used for protectionist purposes, since the objective is to achieve social progress across the board and to ensure that it is spread fairly for the benefit of all.

**Cooperation with UN and ILO and other relevant actors**: the Council supported the ILO initiative on Decent Work Country Programmes, and felt that the EU should encourage the worldwide ratification and implementation of the ILO Conventions, on core labour standards and other Conventions that have been classified by the ILO as up to date, through technical cooperation and through support for the strengthening of the ILO supervisory mechanism. The EU should take the findings of the ILO supervisory mechanism into account more systematically in its own international relations.

**Follow-up**: the Council highlighted the importance of an effective and regular follow-up and coordination of the initiatives and actions to promote decent work for all, and welcomed the Commission's intention to produce a follow-up report to its Communication on decent work by the summer of 2008.